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TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4148
INFO RUCNCLS/ALL SOUTH AND CENTRAL ASIA COLLECTIVE
RUCNCIS/CIS COLLECTIVE
RUCNMEM/EU MEMBER STATES COLLECTIVE
RUEHAK/AMEMBASSY ANKARA 6184
RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING 3867
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO 3726
RUEHIT/AMCONSUL ISTANBUL 4428
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC
RHMCSUU/CDR USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHINGTON DC
RUEHVEN/USMISSION USOSCE 4351

C O N F I D E N T I A L ASHGABAT 000136

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR SCA/CEN; DRL

E.O. 12958: DECL: 01/28/2020

TAGS: [PHUM](#) [PGOV](#) [TX](#)

SUBJECT: TURKMENISTAN: STEPPED UP PRESSURE AGAINST COUPLE
SEEKING RESTITUTION

REF: A. 08 ASHGABAT 1472

[1](#)B. 09 ASHGABAT 644

[1](#)C. 09 ASHGABAT 772

Classified By: Charge Sylvia Reed Curran, Reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

[1](#)1. (C) On January 27, local RFE/RL journalist Halmurat Gylychdurdiyev informed poloff that security officials detained Bazargeldy Berdiyev on January 26. Berdiyev, a former businessman, and his wife have been seeking compensation from the government for illegal seizure of their property and torture that occurred in 1998 (reftels). In a meeting on January 28, Gylychdurdiyev explained that security officials demanded Berdiyev sign a statement relinquishing his claims against the government. Gylychdurdiyev said Berdiyev was told that he would be released if he signed. If he did not sign, he and his wife would be sent to a psychiatric hospital. Gylychdurdiyev said Mrs. Berdiyeva told him their residence was currently under surveillance.

[1](#)2. (C) Gylychdurdiyev could not offer any explanation about why Berdiyev was detained at this time. He said the couple had retained a lawyer, who advised Berdiyev to sign the statement relinquishing his claim. They fired the lawyer. Gylychdurdiyev also mentioned that Mrs. Berdiyeva had traveled to Tashkent last summer for surgery to alleviate pain caused by injuries to her leg received in 1998. He said she paid a \$2,000 bribe to a border guard to leave the country and \$3,000 to the surgeon. Gylychdurdiyev said he did not know the Berdiyevs well, but that he wanted to help them as people whose rights were violated and were suffering. He had no confidence in Ashgabat-based UN and OSCE officials to look into this matter. He planned to scan and email documents related to the Berdiyevs' case to human rights organizations overseas.

[1](#)3. (C) COMMENT: Post had regular contact with the Berdiyevs for a nine month period prior to June 2009. During that time, they provided us with inconsistent (and at times false or fabricated) information and appeared to be obsessed with recovering the property and money seized from them in 1998. Our repeated offer to assist with medical expenses for Mrs. Berdiyeva's treatment was declined. It remains unclear what prompted security officials to take act now, after an

eight-month lull. Perhaps some government official became fed up with the Berdiyevs' continued lobbying with government insiders, which Mrs. Berdiyeva had previously mentioned included Berdimuhamedov's sister (Ref C). END COMMENT
CURRAN